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No. 24.

## GATHERING ARBUTUS.

BY EMMA M. CANN.

What time the fair, green-kirtled Spring  
Flung her rich stores and blusomy crown  
I pluck the purple, bare and brown,  
Whose scented winds can their whispering,  
And raced and wandered up and down.

The broad, free down, from dawn till dusk,  
We stood from out on the banks of men—  
High hills and deep chasms once again—  
To scent the mountain-roses' muses;  
And call wild flowers in wood and glen.

We plucked the sweet arbutus flowers,  
Neath genial sun and tender shade—  
Her lips such wondrous music made,  
I said, "Such heaven-born bliss as ours,  
Can never bright, dear heart, or fade!"

She vowed a tender vow that day,  
This maiden—coyed of coy maid—  
Where dwelt these waxen blooms—in glades  
Where blossoms reared their heads; she did play—  
She, blushing, gave herself away!

## DAVY CROCKETT. ON THE TRACK;

or,

## The Cave of the Counterfeitors.

BY FRANK CARROLL,  
AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF GLENDALE,"  
"JOHN PARMORE'S PLOT," ETC.

### CHAPTER IV.

MED GORDON'S STORY.

The man started on hearing this name, celebrated throughout the country as one of Tennessee's most worthy sons, the prince of hunters, whose prowess with the rifle had gained him the reputation of a Nimrod, and whose exciting encounters with wild beasts, and many hair-breadth escapes, had afforded thrilling entertainment to thousands of his countrymen. They were indeed so surprised, and their eyes so engaged with the face of the renowned hunter, that they failed to notice the hidden form revealed by his movement.

Tim Hall, noticing their pre-occupation, quietly stepped behind Crockett, picked up the cloak, and replaced it upon the table, all unnoticed by them.

The hunter stood with the easy assurance of one who, without undue vanity, is yet aware of his worth, and possessed of that commendable pride which is based upon service rendered, instead of upon empty show.

"Who's the man you're after?" asked Crockett. "Recollect, strangers, we're a quiet lot of people down here; but we are apt to get our backs up if we're aggravated."

"It's not me that would like to aggravate Colonel Crockett," said one of the officers. "We're offscour from Louisville, in pursuit of a man who has broken jail."

"What's the man's name?"

"Edward Gordon."

"The deuce! Ned Gordon, hey? I heard something of this. He made free with a bank, or something of the kind, didn't he?"

"That is what he was accused of. He was knocked down and five thousand in gold taken from him. But the bank suspected that it was a plan between him and the robbers, and arrested him on suspicion."

"And what was their proof?"

"Nothing, except that he had been seen talking to a well-known thief, only a few days before. They kept him in jail awaiting proof."

"And that didn't quite suit his ideas?"

"No. He dropped out the window one fine night and made tracks. We came down here to look for him, knowing that this is his native place."

"That's the story, hey? And you kinder thought he was in this house?"

"I know he was here. I saw him not two hours ago, and his brother has just left here. Do you know the penalty for concealing a fugitive from the officers of the law?" It was now addressed the host.

"I know about this much," replied Hall. "I know you're a couple of infernal catamounts, and if you don't take your ugly faces out of my sight, I'll light on you like a panther on a hog's back. Blast your eyes, I've given you your rope, just to see how far you would go. You're the first coon as ever made free in my house without axing me. Now you'd best take a fool's advice, and git."

"We did not wish to inconvenience you, sir. We were but doing our duty, and what we have warrant for."

"I don't harbor thieves and vagabonds, and I won't harbor police. Git's the word. I'm feeling kinder wolfish, strangers, and if you're not out of that door in three shakes of a coon's tail, you'll get a Tennessee welcome to the guitar."

The stalwart speaker looked really dangerous as he confronted them with angry face, his rolled-up sleeves displaying brawny, muscular arms.

"You're right, Tim. A man's home is his castle," said Crockett. "You'd better take good advice, my friends. If Tim Hall once gets his back up, there will be feathers split. He's not safe to play with."

"All right," replied the officer. "Our man is not here, that is evident, so we have no further occasion to stay, and Mr. Hall may have the full use of his house."

The two men turned and walked toward the door.

"Hold a minute!" cried Crockett. "My body-guard is out there, and mightn't like the looks of ya."



DAVY CROCKETT'S DISCOVERY.

"WELL, I'LL BE SHOT, IF HERE AIN'T WORK! MURDER, SURE AS THUNDER! WHO IS IT, WHIRLWIND, NOW? DO YOU KNOW THEM?"

"Your body guard!" said the officer, inquiringly.

"Yes; Old Whirlwind, who is with a troop of horses. Come in here, old coon-hunter, and show yourself," he said, opening the door and giving a shrill whistle.

This signal was followed by the advent of a strongly-built, shaggy hunting dog, whose torn ears and generally dilapidated appearance bespeaks him the hero of many a contest. Yet he came frisking in with all a dog's gladness to enter forbidden places, and sprang upon his master with an effusive affection that almost over-

"There, boy, that will do. Down, you rascal; do you want to upset old Davy? That's more than the bar could do to-day, hey, Whirlwind? Now, folks, there's a clean track, and no snags in the way."

The fugitive raised himself from his constrained position, and smiled upon the hound, who appeared to recognize him as an old acquaintance.

"Come here, Ned Gordon," said Crockett. "You know me, let me see if you know me."

"Colonel Crockett, I meant to say," replied the officer.

"Wall, that's a handle that I often gets. If it's bar man, that's the handle that you are after. I'm your man. Call on me at Crockett's Clearing, four miles to the side of Sharptown, and I'll give you a bit as pretty sport as ever a backwoodsman used."

"And git out of this now," cried the hound in a violent tone. "I kin chew up and swallow six sich men any day afore breakfast, and if you don't git!"

What terrible threat Mr. Hall was about making was lost in the slamming of the door behind the retreating officers, who evidently thought discretion the better part of valor.

Davy stood, with his chin upon the muzzle of his rifle, looking at his host with an annoyed glance.

The latter lapsed into silence as soon as the door closed upon his intrusive enemies, not finishing the threat he had begun.

"Where is he?" was Davy's first remark.

"Who?" asked Hall, turning with some show of surprise.

"Who! Why, Ned Gordon. Who the thunder do you think I mean?"

"Didn't you just hear me say that I didn't know nothing about him? I ain't taking in runaway jail-breakers."

"Now, just shut your gammon on me. Do you think it's a Louisville policeman you're talking to now, or a man that followed a painter's trail for miles by the scratched bark?"

"What do you mean, Davy Crockett? You don't see no signs of Ned about here."

"Look at Whirlwind's ears, Tim; them's signs of old friends about; and when you try to play mad again, don't lay it on quite so thick. It weren't natural, boy, no more than a woman's face when she's spread with paint, like as I'd spread a slice of bread with wild honey. Don't be making wry faces; I can give you more signs if you want them."

"I don't know nothing about him, Davy. If he'd been here them fellers would have found him."

"Them fellows!" said Davy, contemptuously.

"Do you want to put them on a trail longside of you? Well soon see if I know a bar's paw from a painter's claw. Why, man, I've trailed Florida Indians twenty miles on a stretch, without half as good sign."

"Are you for the boy, or agin him?" asked Hall, anxiously.

"I'm for the right," answered Crockett.

"I always took to the lad, and will yet if

he's straight. But if he's been playing thief, he's crossed clean out of my books. Where is he, Whirlwind? Find him, dog."

The animal rose from the corner in which he had stretched himself, and walked gravely across the floor.

Approaching his master, he looked intelligently up in his face. The latter patted him on the head with a kindly touch.

"Fetch him, Whirlwind," he said.

The dog's next movement was toward the table, where he took a corner of the cloak in his teeth, and with a jerk, pulled it again to the floor.

"I knew so," said Davy, laughing.

"If them fellows had eyes they'd have seen through your little game, Tim."

The fugitive raised himself from his constrained position, and smiled upon the hound, who appeared to recognize him as an old acquaintance.

"Come here, Ned Gordon," said Crockett.

"You know me, let me see if you know me."

"No you were found again."

"Yes. I met Jack Henderson one day in the street. He instantly recognized me, and held me in conversation by threatening me with exposure."

"Which you were fool enough to give in?"

"I don't know if it was foolish, I was trying to make a man of myself, and did not dare to defy him. He even proposed the scheme of which I was accused, to join with them in a pretended attack at some time when I had a large sum of money in hand. This I indignantly refused. The consequence was, that I was knocked down and robbed a few days afterward, fortunately when I had not much money."

"I should think five thousand dollars was a bad lift," said Hall.

"I often carried much larger amounts," said Gordon. "However, my old life came up against me once more. I had been seen talking with Henderson, and was arrested and put in prison on suspicion."

"And why didn't you wait and take your trial like a man? There was no proof to convict you."

"I only got to say that it would have been better for me if I had followed your advice and example," replied Gordon.

"But I was young then, and wild. I have learned sense since."

His inquisitor again bent upon him a scrutinizing glance.

"I've been wild myself," he said. "That is no crime. It's hard to tame young blood. Have you been honest? That is the question."

"I have only got to say that it would have been better for me if I had followed your advice and example," replied Gordon.

"I thought one time you were going to make a man," he continued. "You come of good stock, and you've got a brother that's a credit to the woods and that knows all the virtue of a rifle. But you got in a bad gang, and went back on your promise. I dropped you then. I want to hear you speak for yourself now."

"I only got to say that it would have been better for me if I had followed your advice and example," replied Gordon.

"I was nothing but a rascal then, and I was determined to give them up against me once more. I had been seen talking with Henderson, and was arrested and put in prison on suspicion."

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all nature's beauties and influences. He had work in hand too stern to permit any less vital demand to claim his attention, and trod resolutely on, all heedless of the birds and the dawn.

"Lay there, Whirlwind!" he cried, repressing the eager movements of the dog. "I don't want the road torn up with your claws. Do you hear me, sir? Lay there! When I've done trying my eyes, you try yours now."

The intelligent beast, as if he understood his master's intention, coiled himself in a heap by the roadside, and, save for an occasional radical movement, seemed to have lost all interest in the proceedings.

Crockett prodded cautiously down the road, his eyes keenly noting every indication of its surface, every aspect of the surrounding fields and woods.

"This shooting must have been about midnight," he said to himself, "judging from the time Rob left Tim Hall's. There's been nobody over the ground since but me. There ought to be some sign."

Just where he was the road was too hard to retain the marks of footstep. But near where he had found the body it grew softer, and his keen glance noted the track of feet in the path.

"Two sets of feet, by the powers of old Betsy!" he cried. "And not side by side, but atop of one another. The fellow with the narrow foot and light step went first, and the flat-bottomed foot came after. I know that foot. I've seen it many a day on the track of deer and bear. I could swear that was a hunter's step if I saw it in China. That's Rob Gordon, and now who owns the flat-boot foot?"

He continued onward till past the spot where Rob had been found, examining the marks as he went, and extending his search for about two hundred yards within the borders of the woods.

"There, that will do," he said, coming to a halt. "It is just what I expected. Two sets of feet here, one out and one in. Rob Gordon lay down, light as a deer, and old flat-boot came after, sticking to the fence side till he come inside the wood, and then stepping out bold. He was on Rob's trail going out, that's certain. But where he has lost point this way, he's stepped heavier and wider. I'll let a cow he tracked Rob to Tim Hall's, and then come back here in a hurry and laid for him. He didn't take the road back after he shot, that's plain. He must have took to the woods, or the fields. Nor did he come out to see if he killed his man. He need him drag, and then send himself."

While thus soliloquizing, Crockett was carefully looking for some more decided marks than the ill-defined tracks in the dust from which he had derived such exact information. He found them at length, where the assassin had stopped in the edge of a ditch that ran beside the road. It was dry now, but had recently contained water, and its bottom was still rather muddy. There were five or six well-defined steps in this soft ground ere the person had regained the dry level of the road. Crockett bent over and examined these marks with the utmost attention, noting their every peculiarity.

"Seems to me," he continued, "that we want a man that wears a boot twelve inches long and four wide, with a deep heel and six nails in it, and a patch on the inside corner of the right toe. He's about six feet from top to toe, for here's where he stumbled and dropped over, and there's the marks of his stumpy fingers in the mud. He's got a ring with a big stone in it on the little finger of the left hand. That's what tore up the mud where he jerked out his fingers. So much to begin on. Now let's see his ambush."

Crockett proceeded to the lair where, crouched like a wild beast, the assassin had lain hidden, waiting for his victim's approach. It was a nest of bushes and long grass, which had been broken down and levelled with the ground by the heavy body which had waited there, perhaps for a long time, in expectant ferocity. The trail of the fleeing assassin was plainly visible to the trained eyes of the hunter, leading back through the grass of the field behind him. At a short distance, however, there was a space of hard, stony ground, destitute of grass, and unsuitable to retain any marks from passing feet.

"There's no use to strain my eyes any further. I'll try the dog's nose now. The fellow hasn't been after plunder, that's certain. It's a grudge that's nixed him, and he hadn't the heart to wind up his work. We've only got to search through Rob Gordon's encumbrances, and they're not many. Come, Whirlwind."

The dog had borne the long-enforced penance with evident impatience, and had failed to retain the dignified obedience with which it had first received its master's commands. Without exactly walking, it had managed, by a sort of wiggling motion, to approach much nearer the point of interest, dropping again into stillness as every backward glance of its master.

He needed then no second call to bring it to his side, but with one quick bound was frisking and leaping lightly around him, glad as a year-old pup at its release,

"For shame, Whirlwind," said Crockett, reprovingly. "I thought you were above all such capers. Come, now, put your nose to this spot, and see what it smells of. Hey, boy, have you got it? I thought so, if he goes, like a deer with a bullet in his tail."

The dog had taken the scent in an instant, and darted off on the trail, with a speed that taxed the swift-footed hunter to keep pace with. Straight over the stony ground it went, turning eastward at some distance ahead, and tracking the fields in the direction of the village of Wilson's Corner.

Just before reaching here it re-entered the road. The scented bear had not lain well, and had been further lost under the many feet which had already traversed that part of the road, early as the hour yet was.

But Whirlwind was no common dog. He led the way, slowly but surely, into the village, and straight toward the tavern that formed its centre, on whose porch a number of men were gathered, and within one of whose rooms the inspiring sound of a fiddle was audible.

Reaching the door-step of this house, Whirlwind looked up intelligently into his master's face, then cooled himself up into a keel and lay down beside the doorway with the air of a dog who is proud of having done his full duty.

#### CHAPTER VI. THROUGH THE SNAKES.

But we must follow the adventures of Ned Gordon, the fugitive. After leaving Tim Hall's house he plunged deep into the woods, making his way, by aid of his old knowledge of woodcraft, readily in the direction he desired.

It was his intention to seek the river village mentioned by Crockett, as a resort of gamblers, but before doing so it became necessary to change, in some manner, his appearance, as it was his hope to find men there who would know him too well in his present aspect.

He was a well-built, good-looking man, of light complexion and almost beardless,

with a full head of light-colored hair. His intercourse with light-fingered gentrified had, however, taught him one lesson, used in his present crisis, how to change his appearance.

He was even provided with the requisite disguise for disguising himself, having prepared for this contingency before his escape from prison.

He had changed clothes with his friend Hall, and was now attired in a suit of plain homespun, much the worse for wear, with a fur cap and the other essentials of a wild woods costume.

He had also borrowed a rifle, that necessary of any one who wore the hunter's garb, and which might be needed to provide him with food during his journey through the forest.

With some inconsiderable interruptions there was a belt of forest stretching before him to the Mississippi, a distance of about twenty miles. This was the primeval forest of the region. The air of the woodsmen had never yet levitated its majestic, centuries-old trees. The rifle of the hunter had not yet succeeded in destroying the abundant animal life that made a home in these forest shades.

"This shooting must have been about midnight," he said to himself, "judging from the time Rob left Tim Hall's. There's been nobody over the ground since but me. There ought to be some sign."

Just where he was the road was too hard to retain the marks of footstep. But near where he had found the body it grew softer, and his keen glance noted the track of feet in the path.

"It was the haunt of the black bear, and of that dangerous, cat-like animal, the panther, though the deadly enmity of the hunters had greatly reduced the numbers of both these animals. Deer roamed here in considerable numbers, and elk might occasionally be found, though they had mostly been driven off by the crack of the death dealing rifle."

Of smaller game, animals and birds, the woods were full. The raven, the opossum, the rabbit and squirrel, and many species of edible birds, dwelt here in their original numbers, while the streams which traversed the region abounded with excellent fish.

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Of smaller game, animals and birds, the woods were full. The raven, the opossum, the rabbit and squirrel, and many species of edible birds, dwelt here in their original numbers, while the streams which traversed the region abounded with excellent fish.

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With some inconsiderable interruptions there was a belt of forest stretching before him to the Mississippi, a distance of about twenty miles. This was the primeval forest of the region. The air of the woodsmen had never yet levitated its majestic, centuries-old trees. The rifle of the hunter had not yet succeeded in destroying the abundant animal life that made a home in these forest shades.

"This shooting must have been about midnight," he said to himself, "judging from the time Rob left Tim Hall's. There's been nobody over the ground since but me. There ought to be some sign."

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## THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

died—and at the Park, too, where he had come for the shooting. He had been an unmarried man, and the estate and title went to a distant cousin. What the new Lord Westerleigh was like was a subject of eager interest to his tenants. Mr. Melville only hoped he would turn out of that fellow Laken, the agent—for if not, he should certainly inform his lordship that he could not remain a tenant any longer. Mrs. Melville only hoped there would be a lady at the Hall at last, and Gertrude neither thought nor cared anything about it. There was a grand funeral, and the new lord was present; those who saw him described him as a tall, big, youngish man, but the Melvilles did not see him. He remained two days at the Park, and then went away until the following January, when he was coming back to take up his quarters there permanently.

On one of these two days Gertrude saw a ghost. She was wandering through Westerleigh Park engrossed with her own sad thoughts, and was only recalled to external things by a low, savage bellow close at hand. Looking up, she found herself near to a herd of cattle, and a huge brown bull tossing the mud over his shoulders, his head low, his eyes glaring, with every intention of coming at her. With a cold shiver of terror at her heart, she looked round wildly for some way to escape. At a short distance there was a hedge and a stile, and that was her only chance, but she was so frightened that she felt her limbs would never bear her so far. The bull now twisted up his tail preparatory to a rush, and, with a cry for help, Gertrude turned round, and fell. That cry was answered instantly, for she had scarcely touched the ground when a strong arm raised her, and the next moment she was on the other side of the stile, and in safety. During that first terrified moment she had looked up into the face of her deliverer, and then, the effects of the fright and unexpected relief acting upon nerves already unstrung, resulted in unconsciousness. But she was safe in those protecting arms, and as she rested in them, senseless, she folded her passionately to their owner's broad breast.

Gertrude soon recovered, and found herself lying in a cottage close by; while a woman she knew well attended her.

"Dear me, how foolish I am!" she said, raising herself on her arm; "but it was that horrid bull, Mrs. Foster."

"And enough to frighten you to death, indeed, miss. It's a shame to leave that beast loose! I'm sure it was a mercy the gentleman was there."

"Who was it?" asked Gertrude, as the color came back richly to her cheeks.

"That's more than I know, miss; he's quite a stranger to me, but dear me, such a gentleman! Are you better now, dear?"

"Oh, yes!" said Gertrude, putting her feet to the ground. "I'm all right, thank you. Good-bye, Mrs. Foster."

Her heart was beating wildly with a joyful expectation as she hurried away down the lane. Her deliverer was no stranger to her, for in the face she had seen for one moment, bending so anxiously over her, she had recognized David Gower. But why was he there? If to see her, why had he not stayed to speak to her? Yes! she had seen him! He was no myth, for she had been saved by his stalwart arms, but he had only done what any other man would do, and left her without a word. He had vanished as mysteriously as he appeared; in vain her eager eyes searched the wide expanse of park, and the long, straight lane before her, there was no living creature in sight, but the brawling castle—no sound, but the fall of dead leaves, as they rustled drearily to the ground. A day or two of feverish expectation followed, but he appeared no more, and sadly this last hope faded and died. Still it was sweet to owe her life to him.

Christmas came and passed. Mr. Laken could not get Mr. Melville's rent, and no promises on his part of paying in a week's time, or of reporting the agent to Lord Westerleigh, prevented him from putting in a distress.

"It shall be paid at the end of the week," said Gertrude, for she had persuaded her mother to let her write to Mr. L'Estrange. "Can you not take my word?" she added, indignantly.

"I don't care for words, Miss Melville," replied the agent. "You have five days, and the man will behave himself."

"Very well," said Gertrude briefly; and with that she put on her hat, and set off across the park. She was going to the house; she knew Lord Westerleigh had arrived the day before, and she believed a gentleman would take the word of a lady. It was already dark when she rang the bell at the great door, but the sounding echoes stirred no feeling of awe or misgiving in her heart. A servant appeared, and she asked for Lord Westerleigh. The man was a stranger, and replied, simply, that "my lord was engaged."

"Then, I will wait until he is disengaged," replied Gertrude.

"But I don't think my lord can see you at all to-night. You had better call again in the morning." And he prepared to shut the door as he spoke.

Gertrude was almost in a passion, but controlled herself.

"I think he will see me. Be kind enough to tell Lord Westerleigh that Miss Melville would be glad to speak to him for a few minutes." As she made a step forward the light fell full upon her, and the dignity seemed suddenly to convince the man that he was speaking with a lady. He begged her pardon, and wanted to show her into a room while he went with her message to his master, but Gertrude preferred remaining by the fire in the hall. In a minute or two he returned, requesting her to follow him, and she soon found herself in a small, comfortable room, lighted only by the fire. The walls and curtains were crimson, relieved by lace, and a few marble statuettes; the furniture and carpet were of the same color, and the warm firelight glowed over everything.

On the hearth, with his back to the fire, stood Lord Westerleigh; a man with a fine, tall figure, but whose face she could not see. To her surprise, he came forward with an out-stretched hand, when the servant lighting some candles on the table revealed his face. Gertrude shrank foolishly back from the hand she was about to take, and found herself face to face with David Gower.

"I beg your pardon," she began, turning white to the lips. "It was Lord Westerleigh I came to see."

A faint, mournful smile came to his lips, as he put his hand behind him, and replied:

"I thought you knew I was Lord Westerleigh."

"Lord Westerleigh!" repeated Gertrude, the blood rushing to her brow. "I did not know it, indeed."

"Don't apologize, Miss Melville. Will you shake hands with me now?" he said, holding out his hand again.

"And gladly," came from Gertrude's full heart.

He smiled, and taking her hand, said with his old kind voice, so that she could have knelt down and kissed his feet—

"And what can I do for you?" Tears rushed to her eyes and she looked down to hide them, but he must have seen them, for he turned round, and stirred the fire to give her time. Then she told her story, with a red flush of shame on her brow.

"My father must leave, I know, and we must live differently; but if you will tell Mr. Laken to take the man away, he shall have the money by the end of the week."

Lord Westerleigh did not reply at once; he walked backward and forward twice.

"I am so ashamed," he said at length, "that such a thing should have been done in my name. I will walk back with you, and set it right. I am very, very sorry."

Gertrude made no reply. It was she who felt ashamed, for he whom she had called a "common farmer" was Lord Westerleigh, and far above her—so that he had evidently quite forgotten any affection he might once have had for her, and a bitter pang was making itself felt in her heart as she saw in his calm, unembarrassed manner no sign of the love that had once been hers.

So they walked back together through the dark evening. Not many words passed between them, and Gertrude tried to realize that David Gower and Lord Westerleigh were one and the same person. She was wondering how it was they had heard nothing of the matter from the L'Estranges; but then she remembered that they were still abroad, having gone at the end of the summer. In spite of his altered manner, she felt strangely happy walking once more by his side—so conscious of the charm of his protecting presence.

The house-door stood open, and Mrs. Melville was peering into the darkness.

"Gertrude! Is that you?" she called, anxiously.

Gertrude ran forward, and nestling up to her mother, murmured—

"Here is Lord Westerleigh, mamma; and he will take the man away. And before Mrs. Melville could ask for an explanation, she rushed out of sight up to her own room, where a peep-out burst of tears would be restrained no longer. When they had exhausted themselves, she sat and listened for sounds below. For some time all was silent; then the drawing-room door opened, and she heard Lord Westerleigh and her father's voices as they walked down the passage. A cordial "good-night" closed the interview, and as the hall-door closed, Mrs. Melville came upstairs into Gertrude's dark room.

"Is it all right, mamma?"

"Yes, my dear—but how was it you never told us you had met Lord Westerleigh at your uncle's?"

It was well for Gertrude the darkness hid her tell-tale cheeks.

"Why, mamma, I never knew he was Lord Westerleigh until I saw him this evening. He was only Mr. Gower, you know."

"I should have blamed you for going to him, if he had been a stranger, Gertrude."

"But is he not kind and good?" She was so bold in the dark!

"Good and kind?" indeed he is, God bless him," replied Mrs. Melville, earnestly. "Your father is to begin painting his portrait immediately. He said he considered himself fortunate in finding an artist so near. He is going to have his house full of visitors soon, and he hopes I will go and help him entertain them. Oh, Gertrude!" said poor Mrs. Melville, with tears in her voice, "you cannot tell what will be to me go back once more into the society of my youth!"

Gertrude's arms were round her mother's neck; she felt very happy, somehow.

"Dear mamma, I am so glad! You are too pretty never to be seen."

Mrs. Melville laughed, and kissed her.

"How curiously things happen," said Gertrude; but her mother did not answer, for a dim dream of a possible future was dawning on her mind.

And now Gertrude's life was changed—the silence was broken. There was a voice somewhere always singing to her innocent heart, an echo, perhaps, of Lord Westerleigh's few words of greeting, which were here now two or three times a week, for he came to Mr. Melville's house to sit for his portrait—he said he preferred it—and thus back into the old way of conversation, as when they used to ride side by side at Eden vale; but Lord Westerleigh always checked himself if they seemed to be drifting too far in that direction. His manner was most kind and friendly always, but his voice never once dropped into the tender tone of old; yet Gertrude was not unhappy, because he was present.

His visitors arrived, and Mrs. Melville was much at the Hall. He apologized, as he said, for the trouble he was giving her, adding that he had a sister engaged now in attendance upon an invalid aunt, who in a few months, he hoped, would come to live with him and do the honors of his house. Gertrude and her father were also often invited, and about that time a rumor arose that Lord Westerleigh was about to take to himself a wife; but which of those fair girls, who with their fathers, mothers, and brothers, had been his guests, was to be the future mistress of Westerleigh, Gertrude could not discover. But the truth of the report she never doubted, and in her mind it was confirmed one lovely spring Sunday, when an old and a young lady appeared in the Hall pew.

For who but his betrothed wife could that fair woman be, with the calm, sweet face, who sat, and stood, and knelt by Lord Westerleigh's side? Gertrude's eyes sought her with all her soul in them. "And who so fit to be his wife?" was her despairing comment. A woman near to her own age, beautiful, dignified, with a sweet, intellectual face, grave and restful, the promise of a wise, gentle ruler of his home, and a guardian angel of his life. Gertrude's eager, sorrowful face, could scarcely escape the notice of her on whom it was fixed, and she saw her bend toward Lord Westerleigh's side? Gertrude's eyes sought her with all her soul in them.

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His sister!

The manner with which she received his communication did not escape Lord Westerleigh's notice, although he was very far from attributing it to its true cause. The change of expression seemed to him to indicate extreme surprise, and one day he asked her why he liked best.

She was silent, and he stood there in the red fire-light with David's arm to rest on.

"O, David," she said at length, clinging to him. "It cannot be true."

"Thank God, it is," he murmured, as he raised the little wistful face to his and held it there.

Once more, through the darkness they walked back across the Park and presented themselves before the astonished eyes of Mr. and Mrs. Melville.

David was very abrupt. "You must stay another week," he said, "and leave me a wife."

They did so. And at the end of the week drove away to the station, leaving Gertrude and Lord Westerleigh at the church door.

And quietly through the brown October woods—through the golden light of autumn days—with the full, sweet spring-time of love in their hearts, the bride and bridegroom walked home.

"Never mind—because you loved me, dearest. O, child, what a fool I have been!"

She tried to answer, but he took it in the way he liked best. And she was silent in her full, deep joy, thinking it must be a dream to stand there in the red fire-light with David's arm to rest on.

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And quietly through the brown October woods—through the golden light of autumn days—with the full, sweet spring



# THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

1874.

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## OUR OPENING STORIES

FOR

### THE NEW YEAR.

We shall begin in next week's paper (No. 26), a fascinating novelet of English life entitled

### THE GHOST OF NORMAN PARK;

OR,

### TWO WOMEN WRONGED.

BY MARY AHERSTONE BIRD;

to be followed by the thrilling romance of Northern and of Tropical life—

### THE SEA OF FIRE;

OR,

### ON THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Also, by a new story from the pen of BURR THOMAS, whose late work, "JESSIE DALE, The Conductor's Daughter," excited much interest by its strange plot and striking incidents. His new serial will be entitled

### HARD TIMES;

OR,

### THE REAL VICTIMS OF THE PANIC.

#### A TALE OF THE WINTER OF 1873-74.

It is scarcely necessary to state to those acquainted with THE POST, that the best stories of Love, Adventure, and High and Low Life, in this country and in England, etc., to be found in any weekly paper, will appear in our columns during the coming year. Our Letters, Miscellaneous Articles, etc., also will be of the highest character.

### A WOMAN'S VOW.

BY MARY E. WOODSON.

#### CHAPTER XXXII.

##### SHOOTING AT A MARK.

Were Earle Temperton's cynicism and obduracy of temperament melted away by this one tender, passionate episode?

Alas! no. The bulwarks were heaped higher than ever again over every inward of feeling; and if he had seemed a statue of bronze before, he was hardened into cast-iron now. Yet, to outsiders, the transformation did not appear at once; nor could it have been attributed to any especial cause by them.

In that house at Coldham, from which, like Pandora's box, so many evils had seemed to emanate, hot, passionate tears may have soiled his haggard face, and been visible to human eyes; but now, if known at all, they dried upon his heart and left their blister there.

To James Barrycourt, who had seen him an hour before Horace Eglington had appeared to summon him to the death-bed scene that must live in his memory forever, he seemed the same steady-nerved, strong-thinking reasoner, when the former called at his office, the next morning at ten o'clock, to consult him upon a knotted question at law.

His opinion—the correct one, as it proved to be—was given at once; and Barrycourt returned his thanks.

"No sort of dissipation the previous night seems to render you muddled in the morning—as it does every one else," said the latter, "and yet I would wager, from the circles around your eyes, that you were playing cards last night, until the day dawned."

"No," answered Temperton, as he went on arranging some papers, "I did not play at all."

A few days later, Barrycourt informed him that he expected to be married very soon, and desired him to be one of his attendants.

"Et tu, Brutus," said Temperton, with a smile. "I had counted on you as a club-room associate for years to come."

"Rather let me hope that my own example may prove contagious," replied his friend. "And that I may soon wish you happiness in your own domestic circle."

"No. When I take you to the altar, I shall bid you a final good-bye, old fellow."

"How strange it is that you have never loved," said Barrycourt, innocently.

"Do you think so?" replied the other, quietly. "Well, you see, my dear Barrycourt, the world is made up of all sorts of people."

"Yes, I have been told so—though for my own part, I have always held the particles of aggregate humanity not so very different after all, except as we shape our own destinies. But do you know, Temperton, I have always imagined, that were you to love once it would be with a passion little short of idolatry—that you would never forget; and that you could hate with equal intensity where your animosity was provoked?"

"Perhaps you have not read me amiss," replied Temperton, thoughtfully.

"Then let a mis-tress finish it," answered Barrycourt, laughing. "Do you never expect to marry?"

"I?" said Temperton, with a start. And he added hastily—"never!"

"Then you do not believe a man is happy, married?" asked the other.

"You would be—yes. And I think the

generality of men, or the institution would not have handed down from our first parents," he replied with a smile. "But my own life has been peculiar—perhaps exceptional, and—we will, if you please, Barrycourt, have a glass of ale."

"Which means," thought the other, with a sigh, as he followed him into a room, "that the subject must be dropped. Well, 'le roi le veut, so amen!'

And it was never renewed.

Temperton was at Barrycourt's marriage, and "stood" with a pretty, rosy-cheeked girl. He had affirmed in the beginning, that he rather avoided such things generally, but his friend had appeared here, and he had given over.

"Such a love of a man!" the young ladies had all cried; "he is as cold as ice, and as polished." And they had crowded around Barrycourt to know what the experiences of the other had been in the affairs of the heart. While he, smiling and amused, had intimated grace and immensurable "jeu d'esprit" for each; and when, at a late hour, he took his departure, they murmured regretfully behind their fans, "so soon!" while he, turning toward his rooms, along the quiet streets, exclaimed, with an audible sigh of relief, "at last!"

When the honeymoon was over, Barrycourt sought his friend again. He had drawn him, as he did the majority of persons, with a powerful magnetism.

He began, however, to miss Temperton often and often; and frequently he had looked for him through all their old favorite haunts in vain.

"Where do you hide yourself?" he asked, one evening when he returned a second time to his office to find him there, after a long search.

"My daughter—dear child," he said tenderly, "has an especial love for all the English. She will be glad to see you, madame, at our villa."

A day or so later and Mrs. Ransom had found her way to the sick girl's chamber.

Never had the beauty of Nina Alvarez struck her more forcibly than now, when she lay all unadorned, with her golden hair trailing over the lace of her pillows like molten gold, and the rose-colored draperies of her chamber casting a faintly reflected glow upon her pure white face.

"No wonder he loved her," she thought, with a sigh. "Yethere a false pride of blood must interfere to separate these two, in every respect so fitted for each other; for if nature has any graces in rank, Earle Temperton was born a king."

Nina Alvarez talked but little during this first visit. She lay a greater portion of the time with clasped hands, not listening to those about her, as Violette Ransom plainly saw; but with thoughts far away from all present surroundings.

"You will have to make an effort to arouse her," said the anxious father; "she always relapses into that comatoso state unless you are speaking directly to her."

On the next occasion Mrs. Ransom did arouse her to a startled, alarming interest.

"Miss Alvarez," she said, softly, "you do not know how your face haunts me until I ascertained your name, and then I knew that I had seen you before."

"Come," replied Temperton. "You know six months ago you won the prize, as the best shot of our circle. Let us measure our skill against each other now."

Barrycourt took the pistol from his hand.

"I think I can strike it—even at that distance—once in half a dozen times, if my hand has not lost its cunning."

He commenced to fire—one! two! three! four!

The fifth was in a hair's breadth; and, true to his word, the sixth pierced the blank. He returned the pistol to Temperton with a smile.

The first shot of the latter missed—as Barrycourt's fifth had done; the remaining five went direct to the mark each time.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed his friend, in astonished admiration. "In all my experience I have never seen anything like that. Whatever you engage in, you must exceed all other men."

"I was not aware that you contrived the favor of Mars, as well as Minerva," answered the other. "But, pray, how often would you expect to hit that?"

"Come," replied Temperton. "You know six months ago you won the prize, as the best shot of our circle. Let us measure our skill against each other now."

Barrycourt took the pistol from his hand.

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The fifth was in a hair's breadth; and, true to his word, the sixth pierced the blank. He returned the pistol to Temperton with a smile.

The dark eyes of the Spanish girl opened to their fullest extent, and for the first time she looked her visitor inquisitively in the face.

"And you saw me there?" she asked, with a half gape.

"Yes."

"Ah! I see. How could I forget you? You are Violette Worthington."

"No longer Violette Worthington," she answered, with a smile, half of gratification, half of regret. "I am now married to General Charles Ransom, who has the honor of an acquaintance with your father."

"I tell you nothing ever surpassed it. One would think you had been practicing here for some trial of skill upon which your life depended."

"You think so?" responded Temperton. "Well, after all, who knows? Perhaps it may."

#### CHAPTER XXXIII.

##### THE EXILES AT NAPLES.

Our readers must imagine themselves looking out on the world-renowned bay of Naples, with its hundreds of fortresses, filled with gay pleasure-seekers, apparently without a thought in the world save those afforded by the passing moment, while here and there were to be seen all along the coast the rougher barges of the dryway, indolent fisherman.

The city itself slept in the distance. Indeed everything around wore a semi-somnolent appearance. The streets were crowded with foot-passengers and pleasure carriages, but each and all wore a lazy, self-satisfied look. No one jested another. Nobody was ever in a hurry here. Care should not be paraded in public by one, no matter how darkly it might lie in the closet at home to scare away the joy of another. Let peace reign upon the countenance, though the mantle should conceal a bold stiletto.

It is in Naples, of all the world, that one realizes his idea of a life of luxury. Here the hardest laborer from abroad falls readily into the "delice far niente" of the Italians.

On the beach, this evening, strolled an erect military man of sixty, with some scars, and several insignia of rank: a proty, dark-eyed woman, perhaps of thirty.

They were both English—you could tell at a glance—and when they spoke to each other—though that was not often—it was generally in their mother tongue. The man wore a look of easy complacency, as if he were entirely satisfied with everything about him. The woman, on the other hand, had sometimes a dreamily thoughtful, if not melancholy expression.

They were General Charles Ransom and lady.

The general was an old soldier in her majesty's service of considerable means—but recently married; and with an indefinite leave of absence from the army.

The lady was known to the reader, not a year ago, as Miss Violette Worthington.

The old soldier had met and loved her in the new home to which she had been taken after our last meeting. He had wooed and taken her unquestioningly as his wife. And she had determined to repay him with a life of unquestioned fidelity.

The tread of horses' hoofs was heard behind them, and soon after a carriage drove slowly by.

"Charles," said Mrs. Ransom, turning suddenly to her husband, "can you tell me who they are?"

"Where?" asked the general, aroused somewhat, and glancing around.

"Why there, of course, in that soft-muscled carriage before us! It seems to me that I have seen them both—the old gentleman with the sad but pensive air, and the pale, beautiful invalid. They are out driving every day; yet she never seems to grow better. Who are they?"

"Ah!" replied her husband, "I had intended presenting you to them some days

ago. They have passed a year or so of their lives in England—were there, I think, about the time you left; and are Spanish by birth. The gentleman is Don Juan d'Alvarez, and he has brought his beautiful daughter to Naples for her health."

"Ah! Then I have seen her!"

The quick start and earnest manner were unobserved by the general, as he continued:

"They do say that while in our country

she became involved in a love corps with some young man of brilliant talents but comparative obscurity, whom her father and brother could not think of permitting her to marry; and that she is dying of a broken heart in consequence."

"Poor lady. I had heard the story—all but the melancholy sequel," answered Mrs. Ransom, with a sigh.

"But, my dear," said the general, "it strikes me that those broken hearts are like a broken collar-bone, for instance, easily set and grown together if they are properly managed."

"I have heard of the former that would

defy all the palliatives in the pharmacopoeia of surgery," she answered, with a sigh.

"Papa and darling brother," she whispered one still evening as they sat beside her with tears in voice and look. "I have a last favor to ask now, that I know you will not refuse. It is only a matter of days with me now, but oh, I should so like to see him once before I go! It can do no harm, as you see. Think, both of you, and then answer me."

Sebastian Alvarez buried his face in his hands for a moment, and his frame shuddered.

"Papa and darling brother," she whispered again.

"I have heard nothing of his health since

his departure from England, and now a communication lay before him, entreating, yes, humbly entreating, that he would, at least, for a time overlook the injustice that had been done him, and respond to the prayers of a dying woman by hastening in person to bid her a last farewell.

"That is truly a wise adage in his language which says, 'Bon vies, si vives solo,'" said Earle Temperton, bitterly.

"Welcome, misfortune, if thou comest alone! but for me, the trying ordeals of life seem always two-fold. Am I stronger or weaker, or am I doubly-accursed?"

There was no hesitation for him. She had been true, whatever might be said of others. Her broken heart too fatally proved this, and he owed her at least the recompence which she had asked.

To start on the journey was the matter of a few hours, with one of his ready decision and quick movements.

Travelling day and night, at last he was driving through the streets of the Italian city. No one could have told that he had not been "born a Roman," raised and nurtured here, so "native and to the man" he did seem. He spoke the language with fluency, and at once obtained rooms and refreshments; and the dust of travel brushed from his person, he dispatched a messenger to Don Alvarez to apprise him of his arrival.

The answer came promptly—

"Come at once. You are not an hour too soon."

Don Alvarez met him at the door of his villa. The old man was thin with long vigils.

He was tearful and heart-broken, and wrung Temperton's hand with spasmodic

grief.

Sebastian Alvarez passed him with a haughty bow in one of the saloons.

As he entered her chamber Nina turned with a bright smile.

"Ah! I see. How could I forget you? You are Violette Worthington."

"No longer Violette Worthington," she said, with a smile, half of gratification, half of regret. "I am now married to General Charles Ransom, who has the honor of an acquaintance with your father."

Nina Alvarez had half averted her face, "I know some of your friends in N—," pursued Mrs. Ransom, resolutely.

</

## OUR PREMIUM CHROMO.

We are glad to see that our beautiful Chromo, "One of Life's Happy Hours," is receiving its due share of praise from our readers. We take the following extracts from recent letters. Mrs. Olive King, our graceful and witty New York correspondent, writes us:

"It is the sweet picture issued this year. It represents to the life, perfect happiness and contentment. The face of the mother is not surprised in beauty by any of the Madames of the old Masters. I shall have it framed and hang up where I can look at it often."

Miss Anne L. Forcella, whose charming sketches have been so much admired, says:

"The picture is indeed 'very pretty,' as you say. I think it is more than that. The attitude of the mother is extremely natural and graceful, and the dear little fellow seems lovingly intent upon her admiration."

Mrs. J. G. A., of Newtown, Md., says:

"I have received the Chromo, 'One of Life's Happy Hours,' and am very much pleased with it."

Mrs. M. K. Williams, of Mystic, Connecticut, says:

"I must say the Chromo far exceeds my expectation. The engraving, 'One of Life's Happy Hours,' was very popular, but I think the Chromo will be judged by most people to exceed in beauty anything you have offered before. Please to send to the following names."

## MERRI'S MOTHER.

BY MADGE CARROLL.

### "MY DEAREST LOVE—

"None of my best affection, why continue silent? Why not speak at once? If possible, come to me—the moment you read this, and we will arrange for the future. You will find me on the bridge, or somewhere in Brown's lane, near the bridge.

"Love, your own

"Zee."

Captain Hardigan finished reading this remarkable missive, then took a survey of the surrounding landscape. A landscape, by the way, with very pleasing features, family residences embowered in foliage, stretches of greenward, ribbons of roads winding in and out, distant hill-slopes, variegated with growing grain—and far away, seeming to lift itself against the visual line of the horizon, a silver river, with here and there the dot of a snowy sail.

The little note underwent a second reading, and the landscape a second appeal to make this reading clear, and while this is going on we will take a little run backward in Captain Hobart Hardigan's "wake," as he himself would express it.

Three weeks previous, while bowing along the streets of his native city, he had found himself in the arms of Tom Zollie-

officer. They had been boys together. Tom married in early life, and had a hard struggle to make both ends meet. So hard, indeed, that upon the occasion of his last visit, now twelve years ago, Captain Hardigan had concluded not to go again.

"He's more like Santa Claus," replied the Miss in blue, whereupon Zee threatened her with her malice.

From that hour our friend found himself in clover. Tom was the veritable Tom of yore. Mrs. Zollieofficer being one of those people who lay to heart only the sad things of life, confided at intervals the plaintive side of their family history, and Zee took him in charge when it suited her, alternately petting and scolding as if he were an overgrown boy. Then, too, he made ships for Tom junior, and went in search of waters deep and still enough to sail them in, and spared Trieste a world of tormenting by taking upon himself the entire care of her pets, the rabbits, these rascally creatures having filled her juvenile breast with woe and wonder by manifesting an unnatural appetite for everything, even her little brown slippers, in preference to those recommended as their legitimate food.

To one having spent half his years on board ship this life was like entering another world. And although at times the voices of the old called to and entreated him, Captain Hardigan enjoyed himself thoroughly and no mistake.

One afternoon, weary of "inglorious idleness," he started alone on a long tramp over the hills. Returning by another route, he came upon a cottage nestled on a wood's edge, like some brown bird's nest just dropped from a giant pine. Indeed it was so small he might easily have passed it by on the other side had not a slender smoke-scarf risen from the dilapidated chimney, trailed out across the road, and suddenly suspended between his gase and the fading rose of summer's day.

Capt. Hardigan was thirsty, exceedingly thirsty, and the sight of an old-fashioned well-sweep emboldened him to walk up to the cottage door and ask for a drink of water. He did so, expecting to see some aged dame with no airs and graces where he was to wash an awkward old sailor. He saw instead Merri's mother!

Yes, Merri's mother, sitting there with a black eyed baby on her knee, and the background was the aged dame's imagination had conjured up, and whom he would in his baseness, if the truth must be told, have far rather faced alone. The little lady arose and held out a mite of a hand. Would not the captain walk in? Remembering he had still no small distance to walk before reaching home, and that Tom's tea time was alarmingly close at hand, our friend declined with thanks, yet uttered a moment to pat baby a cheek, and she was that Merri.

"Merri!" exclaimed the little mother in apparently the greatest surprise. "No, oh, my, no. Haven't you seen my Merri?" She was in the drug store, Morristown Barnesberry. Why, I thought everybody knew Merri, but Merri appeared so deeply interested in his keeping cool, our soft-hearted "old salt" could not, by any possibility, bring his mind to the proper point of reference.

The summer days ran on. Zee Zollieofficer turned away all her lovers and would allow no one to escort her save the captain. He was in attendance upon her on every occasion where youth and beauty would meet to "chase the glowing hours with flying feet." The occasions were so numerous Captain Hardigan came to feel more like a martyr than a man, submitting meekly, yet inwardly longing for release and repose. And above all he longed to see Merri's mother, the little girl-mother, with eyes like his own loved her because under the stars.

"You won't wonder then that I love him, and am proud of him!"

"I don't wonder now. I see he's a mother's own boy. These mother-boys almost invariably turn out the best of men, he added, thinking it somewhat curious that the lady started and flushed, then gave an odd little laugh.

He thought it rather curious, too, as he walked away that she had given him no invitation to call again. His old-fashioned notions of hospitality were considerably disturbed by the oversight, if such it was, for he wanted to go again. One thing, however, he resolved to lose no time in doing, and that was to beg a holiday for Merri, and make a boat for him.

At the tea-table he mentioned his chance interview with Merri's mother, concluding with—

"He must be a cute little skipper to run

tion, some one awaited the lady and her bundles. Tom threw the latter out of the window to this personage before the train stopped. And no sooner had it done so than the former almost instantly disappeared in the crowd around the station, with only a dip from the humming-bird's wings in their direction.

Of course Captain Hardigan had a dozen and one questions to ask about Merri's mother, but was forced to postpone them in consequence of a lengthy argument favoring a residence in the rural districts, in which there was no contrary opinion. For Tom had it all to himself.

Finally a new and peculiar emotion caused our friend to decide upon the indefinite postponement of his inquiries; a feeling of faint-heartedness, a certain stiffness of the lips, when he would broach the subject, now, yet not entirely so; in the dead and buried long-ago he had known the same. Besides this lady was a wife and mother, he had no business to be thinking about her in such a way. No business, yet he seemed to see her eyes again in the peeps of sky between the branches, her fluttering garments in the dark green shrubbery, her sweet red mouth in every bud or half-bloom rose that laughed in the sun. Why the very locomotive, now winding away among the hills, said "Merri's mother, Merri's mother," as plain as plain could be.

The train was "getting along in the world famously," was apparent in his surroundings. Its own large breezy house and an acre lot. There were great trees about it, sunny stretches of greenward, vase brimmed with blossoms, and in the background, seen through a vista of beech pillars, four young girls, in buff, blue, pink and white, were making pictures of themselves, playing croquet, seeing Tom making long, swinging strides up the garden walk, the girl in pink and the one in white, Zee Zollieofficer and her sister, one bounding forward, brandishing their mallets like tomahawks, but lowered them on observing the stranger, and advanced more decorously. Zee was tall, like her father. Tall and plump, with an abundance of tawny hair that lighted up ravishingly, a large, laughing mouth, lovely teeth, a white rose complexion flecked with great golden freckles, and big blue eyes, thatched with brows and lashes like her hair. Trieste, not being matrimonially eligible by reason of her youth, is not worthy a description. Suffice to say, it was quite apparent that she would never be the beauty Zee was.

After giving each a resounding kiss, Tom produced his daughters.

"My antislavery friend, Hobart Hardigan, captain of the Dulcinea, a bachelor who should have been in leading strings this twenty years, my daughter Zee, Cap. and this is Trieste, the baby, otherwise known as Tippet. Where's mother, girls?"

Zee took immediate possession of the captain, asking him if he played croquet, and leading him to be initiated in its mysteries.

"An old bachelor, girls," she found opportunity of whispering in the ears of both and blue. "Don't he look exactly like the least bit of a younger Neptune?"

"He's more like Santa Claus," replied the Miss in blue, whereupon Zee threatened her with her malice.

From that hour our friend found himself in clover. Tom was the veritable Tom of yore. Mrs. Zollieofficer being one of those people who lay to heart only the sad things of life, confided at intervals the plaintive side of their family history, and Zee took him in charge when it suited her, alternately petting and scolding as if he were an overgrown boy. Then, too, he made ships for Tom junior, and went in search of waters deep and still enough to sail them in, and spared Trieste a world of tormenting by taking upon himself the entire care of her pets, the rabbits, these rascally creatures having filled her juvenile breast with woe and wonder by manifesting an unnatural appetite for everything, even her little brown slippers, in preference to those recommended as their legitimate food.

The subjoined was not in Zee's account.

Young Mrs. Barnesberry applied to her aunt for assistance; that unworthy lady answered, "I've done my duty by you. I got you a husband, now get yourself another."

The next move was to open a school, but nobody would send children so far; her last resource was family sewing. In this she was somewhat successful, until Mrs. Zollieofficer discovered in Zee a readiness to fetch and carry the parcels truly alarming to her maternal mind. Having her own private reasons for this feeling, she withdrew her patronage; when questioned, not daring to confess, she substituted false objections—a thing, conscientious but thoughtless women will do; and Nita soon found herself almost entirely dependent on her big stepson for all she ate and wore.

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"So you see Merri's mother isn't his mother after all," interlarded Tom, from his nap. "We got in the way, around here, of calling her husband Black Berry. He was so dark, and it don't come handy to remember her name. Then, as everybody knows Merri, we need only say Merri's mother to make it understood whom he will be like him in character, whatever I may do to prevent it. I love my boy as fondly as over a mother loved, and you know what is said about sins being visited—oh, I'm afraid! I'm afraid!"

She broke off suddenly with that clasping the child to her breast. He awoke and smiled up in her face so sweetly she was reassured for the time and turned pleasantly to other topics.

The captain left her with sunset roses on her cheeks and hair; the next day brought him face to face with Zee's message.

Upon the first hint of his starting for the drug-store she had flown for his hat and cane. This was a daily occurrence, accompanied by warnings not to forget any engagement pending, but on this occasion he had observed a slip of paper in the cozy palm of the daughter of the house. When then Zee placed his hat in his hand, and his eye caught sight of that same Nile-green note peeping from the lining, and not a word from that lovely month, he at once appropriated the document, religiously believing it was intended for him, and contained some message he dared not speak. Shade and sunshine came and went in gray and gold across its sloping letters as he read them over a third time, then looked out over a stretch of pasture land and saw the little bridge, veiled in alder-blossoms like a homely bride under rich laces. Our captain had borne the brunt of many a gale gallantly, had looked death in the face unflinchingly, yet over there a beautiful woman awaited him, the rills of ruffling on her blue gingham dress rippling in the wind; but he fled, nor stopped even to take breath until he reached the drug-store and found himself surrounded by a crowd. His perturbation was so apparent, Merri seemed unusually anxious to make him comfortable, bearing his coverted head gear away in a perfect gait of politeness, leaving the old sailor nervously ramming Zee's note down in his vest pocket to make sure it should not escape to fall into other hands. Suddenly an idea struck him. He followed Merri behind the case where he went to put his hat. A thing he never did before. Would Merri mind doing a bit of writing for him? His fingers were all thumbs, couldn't even keep his own log-book. Merri would not mind, what was it?

"Only a line on this," and Captain Hardigan spread the note, face down, on the marble ledge.

Merri would have raised it, but the captain kept his thumb there like the state's seal. Then Merri remarked on the peculiarity of the color. Our captain had seen means like it. What was he to write? Merri asked.

"There will be nothing lost by waiting. The world was not made in a hurry."

It never occurred to our captain that this was a cruel reply to so impasse.

Zee loved him, or thought she did; Tom's heart was set on the match.

And his godson over to Merri's mother.

Very uncomfortable complications certainly, and this was the only way of postponing the crisis he could hit upon.

"A singular sentence," said Merri, slowly dipping his pen in the ink.

"It was an answer to a conundrum, the captain explained.

Certainly not far from the truth.

Merri, apparently greatly relieved,

deached of the sentence asking should he sign any name? Saying no, and thanking him, Captain Hardigan took the precaution to pocket the "answer to a conundrum," including before reaching home to put it where it had been found.

So the summer days ran on. Zee Zollieofficer turned away all her lovers and would allow no one to escort her save the captain.

He was in attendance upon her on every occasion where youth and beauty would meet to "chase the glowing hours with flying feet."

The occasions were so numerous Captain Hardigan came to feel more like a martyr than a man, submitting meekly, yet inwardly longing for release and repose.

And above all he longed to see Merri's mother, the little girl-mother,

with eyes like his own loved her because under the stars.

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invariably turn out the best of men, he added, thinking it somewhat curious that the lady started and flushed, then gave an odd little laugh.

He thought it rather curious, too, as he walked away that she had given him no invitation to call again.

His old-fashioned notions of hospitality were considerably disturbed by the oversight, if such it was,

for he wanted to go again. One thing,

however, he resolved to lose no time in doing, and that was to beg a holiday for Merri, and make a boat for him.

At the tea-table he mentioned his chance interview with Merri's mother, concluding with—

"He must be a cute little skipper to run

a cargo of drags at his age, or does he only sweep out?"

There was considerable of the girl of the period about Zee Zollieofficer; she was no respecter of persons.

"What is the ancient infant talking about?" she exclaimed, dropping her fork in utter amazement.

Tom laid himself back in his chair and laughed as the sons of Anak must have.

"Laughed? No, he fairly roared, kicking the table-legs in uncontrollable merriment.

"Where's the joke, pa? Do tell, said Zee.

Tom was past telling for the time. When he managed to find voice, he said—

"I'll take you down to see him after supper. You can tell him you've seen his mother."

Now, for the first time, Zee comprehended the joke, and she laughed the hearty, red-brown maws all down over her shoulders. Capt. Hardigan joined in the chorus, but for the life of him could not see where the fun was.

After supper there came up a sudden storm, and before its violence had abated, Tom had concluded not to go out, and settled himself to siesta on the lounge.

Mrs. Zollieofficer sewed, Tom, Junior, had launched himself, neck deep, in a nautical novel, Zee had withdrawn to a distant window, and was singing soft songs to the sound of the falling rain, pointing a little toward the west.

"Where?" asked Zee, starting from shadow into light, like a beautiful picture in richest colors. "How do you know?"

Merri laughed, and Dave said something about the time.

"They've gone up the other street."

The picture withdrew into shade again.

This seemed to be Captain Hardigan's opportunity. He improved it by asking Mrs. Zollieofficer about Merri's mother. That lady shook her head dubiously, and her answer tended to arouse suspicion.

Zee started into the light again, a rare find of the sun.

"Naughty, naughty boy!" showering such kisses on the baby face the captain wished with all his might he hadn't come.

"I had left the room but a moment to

give some directions to Jubie, and he rolled himself right up in there," she explained to the captain, who gallantly released her.

"Naughty, naughty boy!" showering such kisses on the baby face the captain wished with all his might he hadn't come.

## THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

Every word that he uttered went to poor Claudio's heart like so many sharp knives. She, who would have given all that she possessed—nay, her very life—for him, to hear him speak such gentle, loving words of another, to see his weeping tears such as men seldom weep, like shedding drops of their heart's blood, for another woman to feel that one, who loved him so, was only as a sister to him. It was hard, very hard; but she was brave, and her love was unselfish, so she hid the wounds from which she was bleeding.

"No, you can do nothing," she murmured.

"Oh, but I am terrified for her," he went on. "That man would be doing out at that untimely hour. But it was no business of his, and he drove her rapidly, as she had requested, though the festing minutes seemed to her like long hours in her impatient anxiety, and she fancied that a long time had passed before he set her down at the end of the dull street, which was only a row of back doors lit into low brick walls, behind which rose a stately grandeur the houses, one of which contained so much to interest her.

She dismissed the man, and the stepper held between the finger and thumb. Another moment and the deadly draught would have been mixed, but the hand of the would-be murderer was suddenly arrested in a manner he little expected, for Claudio quietly put aside the curtains, and glided swiftly toward him.

With a low cry of terror he receded from her. To his guilty imagination it seemed as though a spirit from the other world had come to stay his hand, for a moment he could not speak. Then, as he saw who it really was, he rallied from his momentary terror, and confronted her.

"You here!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, my lord. I have come in time, I see."

"To save you from making a grave mistake."

"I—I do not understand."

"Yes, I repeat, a terrible mistake. Your morning's work would have been wasted if I had not come to help you."

He looked at her doubtfully.

"To help me?"

"How?"

"You were about to use the contents of the wrong bottle. That is simply the narcotic."

the coffee, and then paused for a moment, with an evil look upon his face.

"No," he muttered, "she didn't want any coffee. Wouldn't take it from me for fear that I should poison her, I suppose; but you'll take it now for all that, my lady."

Already the little gold top was unscrewed from the phial, and the stopper held between the finger and thumb. Another moment and the deadly draught would have been mixed, but the hand of the would-be murderer was suddenly arrested in a manner he little expected, for Claudio quietly put aside the curtains, and glided swiftly toward him.

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CHAPTER LI.  
IS THE DEAD DONE?

Murder most foul, as the best it is—but this most foul, strange and unnatural.

—Shakespeare.

His lordship looked at Claudio with a searching glance as she spoke the words; but she did not shrink, and he, uncertain in his own mind, believed that she had spoken truth, and replaced the stopper in the phial, still holding it tightly clenched in his hand, however, while he stood looking at his visitor.

It was a strange scene, if any one had held the clue to what it meant—that dark, defiant-looking man, faced by a pale, delicate woman, who had to exercise all her powers of self-command to prevent his perceiving the state of nervous agitation in which she was in. One only thought possessed her—how to prevent this madman from carrying out his fiendish intentions; for that Lord Nortonshall was not in his proper senses the actress firmly believed, and to a certain degree she was right.

She had stayed him for the moment; but she must still employ stratagems to defeat entirely his purpose, and in the few moments she had been in the room she had presented itself to her mind by which she might save the unfortunate Almæ.

And now a strange nervous dread took possession of Claudio Wynne's heart and mind. She shook in every limb as she thought that, after all, she might have made a mistake, and that there would be a fatal ending to the scene yet.

"Almæ!" she murmured, "what shall I do?"

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She did so; indeed, it would have been impossible for her to keep her feet any longer. Her knees trembled, and the room swam round with her, as she saw his lordship walk toward the door of his wife's room, with the poisoned cup still in his hand.

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## SHALL WE KNOW THEM?

BY HANNAH BRADY.

The loved, the early lost, gone on before us—  
To that fair country where no clouds appear,  
The voices hushed at those still life's chores,  
Their dwelling-place known by mortal eye—  
Are they all lost?—is the common question asked.  
Twinkling blighted hearts that here on earth were  
In the bright land where spirit harps are blended,  
How shall we know our own peculiar dead?  
How shall we know them, where pale light wanes,  
Spreads the rich chanting of the choir-bells,  
And the wide bounds of Heaven's dome are ringing  
With the glad echo of the angels' hymns?  
How shall we know them? Since the earth's creation,  
The mighty hosts of God have multiplied,  
In creation through the saints of every nation,  
King empires proudest to the Lamb who died.  
Ah, longings born of tender recollection!  
Sweet loves will those sinless ones appear;  
But through the golden veil of their perfumed robes  
Will other the love that made us happy here?  
A father's love? A sister's or a brother?  
How could they be to loving hearts unknown?  
And who could fail to recognize a mother?  
Even amid the millions that surround the throne?  
Yes, we shall know them, God's great mercy streaming  
Mighty perfect joy to all that dwelling-place;  
And the world will be Heaven unto our spirits,  
Till we know each dear familiar face.

## Biographical Sketches.

## MARCISO LOPEZ.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Marciso Lopez, who made two attempts to deliver the island of Cuba from Spanish rule, was one of the bravest soldiers of modern times. In the mere physical insensibility to danger, which even many soldiers generally possess in a high degree, Lopez was unsurpassed; but in the moral principle—that glorious instinct without which true heroism cannot exist—he seems to have been deficient.

Lopez was born in Venezuela. His father possessed vast estates in the llanos of South America and numerous herds of wild horses and cattle. Among the herdsmen of the provinces, who almost live on horseback, Nasco had the best teachers in the art of riding. He became an expert horseman almost before he had learned to tell he was taught to cling to the mane of an unbroken horse.

Venezuela was at this time governed by Spain, but while Lopez was still in his teens, the province became the scene of revolution. The inhabitants arose in arms against the government of the mother country. Lopez entered the revolutionary army which was headed by the celebrated General Bolivar. When the royal forces had defeated Bolivar at La Puerita, they besieged Valencia. The citizens, trusting to Bolivar's promises of assistance, defended the place for three weeks, and Lopez fought with desperate valor. The "Liberator" made good his retreat, but did not return to aid the besieged citizens, and the place surrendered. The victorious soldiers poured into the city and indulged in a general massacre.

Lopez managed to escape death at the hands of his enemies, and his filial affection was the means of bringing about that result. Negro slaves were in general exempted from the terrible fate that was meted out to their masters. They were regarded merely as tools used by more skilful men. Knowing this, Lopez joined a large party of negroes. As nightfall, however, he started to search for his father. Nasco and his two dark servants traversed the streets. They were not arrested, but they discovered nothing. Filled with anxiety Nasco returned to his hiding-place to find that it had been attacked during his absence. Before him lay eighty-seven murdered men, writhing in their blood. He had providentially escaped a like fate. His father had not suffered in the massacre, but his whole fortune had been lost during the convulsions. He was now a ruined man, and his son was no longer heir to the immense *llanuras*, with their flocks and herds.

The conduct of General Bolivar in not coming to the relief of Valencia excited great indignation among the inhabitants of that city. Lopez was so deeply enraged by the apparent treachery of the Liberator that he determined to transfer his services to the opposing side. Accordingly he entered the army of General Morelos as a common soldier. The real principles that underlay the conflict between the royal and revolutionary forces could have had but little weight with him, when he could fight with equal ardor for either side.

In the royal army his rise was rapid. Some of his exploits read like those of a hero of romance. He was recklessly daring, no peril daunted him, adventure was in the very breath of life. At the age of twenty-three, he was a colonel in the Spanish service, and he deserved his rapid promotion—a remark that cannot be made of all colonels—if gallantry ever deserved reward.

On one occasion, at the head of a small body of cavalry, thirty-eight in number, he ventured to charge the rear of the retreating troops of Paez. He had proceeded some distance from the main body of the royal army, when the rebel general, heading a band of three hundred picked men, charged him. With lightning-like swiftness, Lopez calculated his chances. He ordered his soldiers to dismount, formed them into a compact square, in that position they kept the enemy at bay until assistance arrived.

Colonel Lopez received the cross of the order of St. Fernando, of the most distinguished degree, "an honor so rarely bestowed," says a writer on this subject, "that in the whole army there was but one soldier who possessed it beside himself." This reward is not bestowed at the pleasure of the sovereign, but is adjudged by a tribunal, to whom the claim is referred, and by whom counsel and witness are heard on either side, every one being at liberty to interpose an objection."

When, in 1823, the royal army evacuated the capital of Venezuela, the revolutionists offered Lopez the post he had held in the retiring army. He refused the offer, and went to Cuba.

His love of adventure next carried him to South America again. This time it was to explore a wild part of the country. The expedition was not the less agreeable to Lopez as the way was beset by both Indians, and some hard fighting was necessary; but, as he was, he could not fight thirst. No water was to be found, and the whole party were perishing for want of it, when about sunset an Indian warrior, mounted on a light-colored steed, with black feet and mane, appeared riding toward them. They made known their suffering state to the new-comer. He understood their pantomimic signs, and intimated that he would lead them to a spring. The whites hastened. Was the red-skin a ferocious enemy who would lead them moreover into the midst of some of his warlike countrymen? They could not

answer the question. Lopez offered to risk his life, in order to test the faith of the guide. He fearlessly mounted behind the Indian, and rode away. His companion remained on the ground, but with faint hope of his return. The Indian was true to his promise, and Lopez was enabled to lead his companions to a place where water abounded.

He married in Cuba, but returning to Spain served with distinction in the Spanish army. During the administration of General Valdes as governor of Cuba, Lopez held several important offices, but when that governor was deposed, he became dissatisfied with the manner in which Spain ruled the island. He formed plans for making Cuba independent, and these being discovered by the authorities, he fled to the United States. He was not disheartened, however. He organized an expedition for the invasion of Cuba. Commanding six hundred and nine men, he landed at Cardenas. Although at first successful, he was compelled to retreat to the United States.

During the summer of 1851, General Lopez undertook another expedition against the Spanish forces in Cuba. He sailed from New Orleans in the steamer *Pampiro*. President Fillmore issued a proclamation warning Americans that by taking part in this expedition, they violated the laws of neutrality, and by so doing, would place themselves beyond the protection of the United States. With less than five hundred men, Lopez landed at Morilla, on the 11th of August. Instead of assisting the invaders, the Cubans fled before them. Death and desertion thinned the small band that followed the rash but gallant chief. Taking refuge in a farm-house, he fell asleep, worn out by fatigue and suffering. While asleep, he was captured, taken to Havana, and condemned as a traitor. The Americans who survived, were kept in prison for some time, but they were finally allowed to return home.

## SELF-FOILED.

BY ANNIE H. JEROME.

"There he goes again!" thought old Madame Hochelle, gazing fretfully after her handsome young nephew as he crossed the porch of the pretty rose-embowered cottage opposite her own imposing residence. "What evil genies brought that Kate Thalyo to her sister's just at the time that Maurice comes here, nobody knows, unless, indeed, Mrs. Thalyo herself. I daresay she thought Maurice would be a fine catch for her husband's poor sister, Ha, not at home, eh?" Going up to Sunbeam Hill, of course, her thoughts went on, as the young man turned from the door and hastily made his way to the street again.

"And there he goes after her, the lovesick ninny! I verily believe the minx steals off to that hill just to entice him. Well, well, Miss Kate, we'll be even yet! It's a long lane that has no turning."

And Madame's eyes dropped abstractedly to the door as her offending relative vanished around the street corner. Minute after minute she sat there, an expression on her face which was never found on that of a good woman. At length she arose with a satisfied smile, and despite her sixty odd years quickly ascended the stairs to a back chamber whose windows overlooked a fine expanse of country.

"Yes, you, well enough to see what they are about up there," she muttered, taking a small spy glass from the closet and adjusting it with a vicious jerk. "Humph, just got there! shaking down the scarlet maple leaves to announce himself. Well, she looks just pretty, for all, under the purple sunset glow and that flame-like shower. And how the delight beams through her surprise! But riches should mate with riches, and she's as poor as a church mouse."

And this reflection effaced the softer expression from Madame's lips and set them in their former stern rigidity. Long and patiently she watched the two, vexed countenances and bitter ejaculations mingling ominously together, and when they finally left the shadow of the old maple she put away the glass with a few quick nods that belied her good to Kate Thalyo. A little later she was making a careful tour of her beautiful front grounds. In due time her patience was rewarded. The two for whom she watched came slowly down the street, and as good fortune had it, on Madame's side, and the snare old lady madame's greeting Miss Thalyo was quite another from the patient spy of the previous hour.

"I beg you to come in, my dear," she cried, throwing open the gate and seizing Kate's hand, "and while Maurice is at the post office for me I will show you how defant my summer flowers have been of fall winds."

Maurice looked surprised.

"How is it that Alice did not go?" he asked.

"Is she sick?"

"No; but he seemed so tired that I forbade his going, knowing that I could send you."

My Aunt Hochelle has suddenly become very considerate," thought Maurice as he excused himself to Kate and hurried away. "Alice was all right two hours ago."

It was but a stone's throw to the office, and Madame took prompt advantage of Kate's first remark as they turned from the gate.

"Yes, my dear," she answered brightly, "it is a charming place, and I am proud of it. But I assure you I shall be doubly so when Maurice's lovely bride is installed here as mistress. I long since promised him this place should be my gift to them on their bridal day. She is a magnificent creature, Miss Thalyo, and Maurice says the loveliest on the face of the earth—or has made you the confidant of his rapturous admiration of Marie!"

"No, madame," answered Kate a little faintly as she beat over the fragrant bloom of a night-scented jessamine.

"He has not? Well, I am surprised, I admit, for I know he places you far above the scores of beauties with whom, I repeat, say, he flirts most outrageously."

"I have had no such pain as you are, Miss Thalyo," she abrupted said as Kate reluctantly turned from the friendly jessamine.

"You should not mind that heavy perfume; it is very injurious to persons of your fine organization. Here, my dear, let me give you a bit of the more delicate heliotrope."

"But that will leave me without your escort," Madame complained. "Nevertheless, I see you are right. I will go," she directly added.

So Madame started on her journey utterly forgetful, in her overwhelming anxiety for the thousands at stake, that the intended note to Kate Thalyo remained unopened.

Nor did her mind revert to it till the weight of anxiety oppressing her had been relieved by an interview with Landing. Under the rebound lesser cares presented themselves.

"It is really quite unnecessary to write," she thought; "but I will nevertheless do so to-day, and thus make all



## CONSOLATION.

HOUSEMAID.—"I'm sorry to hear you've lost your uncle, Mary."

MARY.—"Yes, it was quite sudden. But—ain't it a real comfort as I got that black dress, instead of the green one you wanted me to buy?"

My aunt rarely never reported so great a fatality to you?"

Kate remaining silent; he said, hotly—

"Miss Thalyo, will you share me a little money, and end this with a frank statement, or must I leave it all from my name? What have you heard derogatory to my character as a gentleman?"

Kate pausing and flushing alternately, at last recovered somewhat falteringly—

"I have only heard the story of your engagement, Mr. Arnot."

"What engagement?" he asked, in amazement.

"What engagement?" she replied, still more falteringly.

"Miss! when did you hear all this?" he asked, calmly and gravely.

"The evening that I spent with madame," answered Kate again, looking much like a prisonee at her downcast face a moment, and then whirled around and stood in the doorway of the summer-house for what seemed an age to Kate. Presently he came back to her.

"And you believed her, Kate?" he said, reproachfully. "You believed her after all my silent worship of yourself? Kate, Kate! no one could have made me doubt you!"

"Could I doubt your own aunt?" murmured Kate.

"But you could doubt me! Now listen, Kate. Marie is a creature of my aunt's imagination—all that she has told you is a fiction. I love you, and you only. Will you be my wife, Kate?"

Kate's answer must have been favorable, for madame received by the next mail a letter from Maurice Arnot which contained the following—

"Your letters were duly received by Kate and me, and the necessary exchange duly made. Believe me, my dear Aunt Hochelle, that we both thank you warmly for so promptly undoing what was so unwisely done. Kate and I are very happy and ask your blessing upon our engagement."

The sheet dropped from madame's hands.

"Letters exchanged! what have I done! what have I done!" she exclaimed in bitter astonishment and shame.

But she took good care never to ask either Maurice or Kate, and deciding to make the best of a disagreeable event, she called on Kate the next week with a bland innocence truly edifying to the lovers.

## A FRIGHTENED "GHOST."

BY MARK EDWARDS.

"Where is Lucy, Rob?" asked Ida Leander of her younger brother.

"Don't know," responded he briefly.

"Well, I know," she said; "she's out near Cemetery Hill with Ellis Lee. I only wanted to be sure of it."

Ida, with a merry, mischievous toss of her girlish head, was off.

"Wonder what she's up to?" queried Rob, as he watched her hasten toward the house in the soft summer twilight, entering by the back way.

Ida, as she left him, chuckled mischievously to herself, "Won't I give them a good scare—Lucy and that dandy, Ellis Lee? I know he's a dreadful coward. Oh, what fun to see him run—faint, maybe!"

Ida really loved a joke—practical jokes, even, when they were not at her own expense.

She darted into the house, clattered upstairs to her chamber, jerked a shawl from the bed, folded it into a small compass, hid it under her apron, and then glided by a round-about way to that favorite trysting spot of Greenwood lovers, the road that ran by beautiful Cemetery Hill.

She thought it would be capital fun to appear suddenly as a supernatural being to her sister and Ellis Lee, and deciding to make the best of a disagreeable event, she called on Kate the next week with a bland innocence truly edifying to the lovers.

The sentence remained unfinished. Starting from his chair with a force that sent it whirling to the floor, he dashed out of the house and across the street to the cottage.

"Miss Kate's down in the summer-house, sir," replied the servant to his impudent inquiry, adding to herself as Maurice entered the room: "Kate is a bold girl."

The sentence remained unfinished. Starting from his chair with a force that sent it whirling to the floor, he dashed out of the house and across the street to the cottage.

"I have a letter here, Miss Thalyo," he continued, handing her a letter addressed to Miss Kate. "I was just on the point of sending Betty over with it. I am quite acquainted with its contents, for on reading 'Dear my nephew,' I have been moved to eat her. Whatever has Miss Kate been doing, I wonder? Something I know, for he hasn't been here for an age or more, and before this he as good as lived here. Thank fortin' I ain't no lover of nobody's. They're allers a-blillin' in hot water."

Maurice, quite unconscious of his looks and Betty's criticisms, dashed on and into Kate's presence.

"I have a letter here, Miss Thalyo," he continued, throwing himself into a seat opposite the one from which Kate had nervously started. "It is from my aunt, and though directed to me, was meant for you, I found, after possessing myself of a portion of its mystifying contents. Will you be good enough to enlighten me as to its meaning?"

"Her nephew! The secret!" exclaimed Maurice in angry surprise. "To whom can she be writing?" And he hastily turned to another page. "Miss Kate Thalyo! By all."

The sentence remained unfinished. Starting from his chair with a force that sent it whirling to the floor, he dashed out of the house and across the street to the cottage.

"I have a letter here, Miss Thalyo," he continued, handing her a letter addressed to Miss Kate Thalyo. "I was just on the point of sending Betty over with it. I am quite acquainted with its contents, for on reading 'Dear my nephew,' I have been moved to eat her. Whatever has Miss Kate been doing, I wonder? Something I know, for he hasn't been here for an age or more, and before this he as good as lived here. Thank fortin' I ain't no lover of nobody's. They're allers a-blillin' in hot water."

Maurice took the letter; but without a glance at it, continued sternly—

"Miss Thalyo, what secret has my Aunt Hochelle confided to you? It is my right to ask, and my right to be answered, since it appears from this precious epistle that she is more than anything else; a bold girl."

And as they faced themselves, she gave them a look that was sharp as lightning, and then turned to the signature, which proved to be Madame Hochelle's.

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